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February 15, 2011

The President
The White House
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

I am writing to you as a follow-up to our last meeting in the Oval Office to reiterate my serious concerns and to implore your Administration to take immediate action to stem the foreclosure and economic crises that continue to devastate my district. The fact that the worst housing crisis in American history was not even mentioned in the State of the Union address was a glaring omission and deeply troubling.

As I have stated repeatedly, what has become of my region in the Central Valley of California is nothing short of an economic disaster. Unemployment rates and foreclosures in the Central Valley are among the highest in the country, reaching above 20 percent in some communities. The three biggest cities in my district, Merced, Modesto, and Stockton, have the 3rd, 7th, and 8th highest foreclosure rates in the country, respectively. These cities also rank in the top six cities nationwide for unemployment rates, with Merced the fourth-highest in the country. Quite simply, the foreclosure and economic crisis affecting my district has reached a catastrophic level.

Furthermore, the situation continues to worsen with ample evidence that we have not yet hit the bottom of this economic crisis in my district. Several months ago, another major employer in California, the New United Motors Manufacturing Inc., (NUMMI) an automobile plant jointly owned by Toyota and GM, shut its doors and closed shop. The NUMMI plant employed 4,700 Californians, 800 of these were my constituents, and it provided \$512 million in annual payroll taxes to the state. It also provided business to 47 parts suppliers and more than 1,000 procurement suppliers in 35 California counties, of these suppliers nine are small and medium sized businesses in my district. The economic impact of the NUMMI plant closure continues to devastate my communities and is another terrible blow to California's already ravaged economy.

Mr. President, to speak frankly, none of the federal government's programs offered by your Administration has been effective at delivering the relief that has been promised to my constituents. Yet none of the solutions that I put forward over the last two years have received support from your Administration. The legislation I proposed over two years ago to stem the

housing crisis early-on and have reintroduced in the 112th Congress called the "HOME Act," my request for an Economic Disaster Declaration for the Valley, the majority of my communities Neighborhood Stabilization Program (NSP) applications for assistance, were all summarily denied by your Administration.

The minimal assistance that we have received is hardly enough to make any bit of difference in a district that has been economically decimated at a level some have compared to the devastation suffered by New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina. What has been put forward to fix the rest of the country has done nothing – and continues to do nothing – to help my community, and I have been direct and clear about this over the past two years.

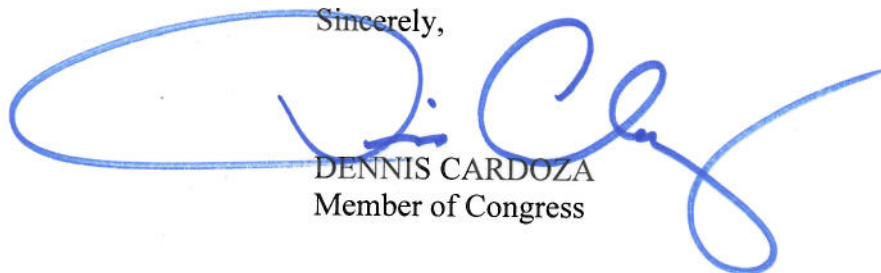
We have an unprecedented crisis on our hands in the Central Valley that threatens its very existence. My definition of "crisis" is a disaster that requires an immediate response. Since your election, I have personally written more than 25 letters to your Administration pleading for action to stem the crisis. I have met with you personally, participated in several dozen meetings with top Administration officials, including Secretaries Donovan and Geithner, and my staff has held more than 17 meetings with Administration staff. I have repeatedly asked for help to solve the underlying causes of the economic devastation. Despite all of my best efforts to work with you and your Administration to address the desperate needs of my constituents, relief still has not arrived. This public sentiment continues to be echoed loudly by my constituents and in our local media urging you, Mr. President, to pay attention to the Valley's rising "misery index" (*Fresno Bee Editorial*, 1/7/2011).

It is clear that the national economy is growing again, and employers are now starting to slowly hire once more. But Mr. President, we do not yet see signs of recovery in the Central Valley. In my district, it is also clear that the Recovery Act funding and other federal programs have not reduced the number of foreclosures, addressed the rising levels of unemployment, or jump-started our local economy. While I admire your renewed commitment to getting our fiscal house in order, and I look forward to working with you to that end, your current approach that continues to rely on these failing policies will not suffice.

I understand that our entire nation is hurting right now. But the fact remains, the people I was elected to represent are suffering far worse than others. My district cannot wait any longer for assistance. We need your Administration to finally take immediate action that produces tangible results and brings actual relief that is long overdue.

Mr. President, I am urgently requesting a personal meeting with you and I ask that you honor your commitment to come to the Valley and see the unprecedented level of economic devastation firsthand.

Sincerely,



DENNIS CARDOZA
Member of Congress